pokemon

When you think about it, the world of Pokémon is very strange. Why are kids allowed to just roam the world training monsters for battle? Over the years fans have come up with a theory for why Pokémon is the way that it is: Sometime before the events of the Pokémon games, shows, and movies, there was a great war. Given their powerful destructive capabilities, Pokémon were likely used as living weapons during the conflict. Lieutenant Surge, one of the original gym leaders from Pokémon Red and Blue, tells the protagonist straight up that "electric Pokémon saved me during the war!" That line from Surge was one of the core components of the original creepypasta post that first promulgated this popular fan theory. Surge certainly dresses like a veteran with his army camouflage, and there are few adult men of his age around in those games; it's mostly single mothers like the protagonist's, or old men like Professor Oak. That demographic arrangement would make sense after a destructive war, as does the proliferation of tall grass across the Pokemon landscapes — grown wild over scarred battlefields, perhaps? Others have added to this theory over the years. In a 2015 video from PBS Ideas Channel, Mike Rugnetta added that a Pokémon War would explain why the protagonist is sent out into the world with a Pokédex in the first place: "To either collect or verify information lost during the war, and to determine which species of Pokémon survived the conflict." The war would also explain why regions like Kanto and Johto seem so cut off from each other and can only be explored in different games. In this light, the Pokémon stories take on a rather beautiful subtext: The protagonist is not just going on a grand adventure, but also reconnecting these different regions and learning to live with Pokémon as friends and companions rather than soldiers and battle slaves. No one ever said peacetime was easy.